

BOOK REVIEW

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Die Käfer Mitteleuropas, edited by H. Freude, K. W. Harde, and G. A. Lohse. Band 5. 1974. Staphylinidae II (Hypocyphtinae und Aleocharinae) Pselaphidae. Price about \$25.00 U.S. Goecke and Evers, Krefeld, Germany.

I hate to admit to my colleagues that I am a "closet German taxonomic key reader," but there it is. If you must be such a key reader, I can think of no better work than *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*. It has the same soothing quality of the book, *Käfer und Pilze*, in the series "für Jugend und Volk", and furthermore, the keys work. This particular volume continues the general series and is a companion volume to volume 4 which contains the remainder of the Staphylinidae. Middle Europe was defined in volume 1 as Germany, Denmark, Holland, Luxemburg, the "German-speaking part of Switzerland", Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the western part of Poland. Species found in France, Belgium, eastern Poland, and southern and western Switzerland were included if the authors thought that they could be found eventually in middle Europe.

Volume 5 is the product of 5 men: Dr. G. A. Lohse wrote the general section on the Aleocharinae including 2 keys to the tribes, both of which work for the European tribes included. Lohse also wrote the sections on tribes Deinopsini through Falagriini and tribes Schistogeniini-Aleocharini. Drs. G. Benick and Lohse wrote the section on the tribe Callicerini and Z. Likowsky wrote the section on the genus *Aleochara*. Dr. Claude Besuchet wrote the section on the Pselaphidae.

In general, the volume is well written and well illustrated. This is particularly true of the section on the Pselaphidae where the facies of each genus is shown, and many of the male genitalia are neatly illustrated. I am not qualified to make any further comments on the pselaphid treatment, as I am not familiar with the intricacies of the classification of the European fauna.

Staphylinid workers will find many changes in the higher classification of the Aleocharinae. These are summarized in Table 1. Many of these have been in use for some time. Kistner (1972) recognized the Falagriini. Lavasseur (1965) used the term Zyrasini, etc. What makes the changes look so numerous is the fact that this is the first comprehensive work on the Aleocharinae since the *Coleopterorum Catalogus* and we can see the magnitude of the quiet revolution that has been occurring. In general, I agree with all the changes that have been effected. We will have to see what this does to all the more specialized and non-European tribes, of course. The radical change of the name Athetini to Callicerini is rendered necessary because *Callicerus* Gravenhorst (1802) is the oldest genus included. Changing Myrmedoniini to Zyrasini is not mandatory according to the international rules since family-group names may be based on synonyms but in another generation most biologists will wonder what *Myremedonia* was. Shifting to Zyrasini is probably both logical and timely. This is especially so since with the restricted structure of the tribe, only *Zyras*-related genera are now included.

A brilliant move was to remove the Dinardae, Oxypodae, and Caloderae from the Aleocharini. Now the Aleocharini are clearly defined by the 5-segmented maxillary palpi and the often 4-segmented labial palpi. *Aleochara* is pretty isolated this way but not for long as genera now included elsewhere will soon be moved into the Aleocharini (e.g., *Termitohospes* and *Discoxenus*). It remains to be seen whether combining the Oxypodae and the Caloderae into one tribe will stand further investigation.

One troublesome aspect of separating the Callicerini, Falagriini, and the Zyrasini has been to find adequate characters to separate these large groups of genera. Lohse has done this on the basis of the structure of the mouthparts. He separates the Callicerini and the Falagriini from the Zyrasini by the structure of the lacinia which is either toothed or extensively spined in the first 2 and with many fine setae in the Zyrasini. Falagriini and Callicerini are separated from each other by abdominal, head, and hind tarsal characters.

I can only fault the book for the use of so many abbreviations for morphological structures. This was probably done to save typesetting costs, but I wonder if it really

TABLE 1. Changes in the higher classification of the Aleocharinae proposed in *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*.

Status in the Coleopterorum Catalogus	Proposed Usage
Tribe Hypocyptini	Subfamily Hypocyptinae
Subtribe Gyrophaenae	Tribe Gyrophaenini
Subtribe Homalotae	Tribe Homolotini
Subtribe Siluae	Tribe Silusini
Subtribe Phytosi	
Subtribe Bolitocharae	Tribe Bolitocharini
Subtribe Autaliae	Tribe Autaliini
Subtribe Falgriae	Tribe Falagriini
Subtribe Athetae	Tribe Callicerini
Subtribe Schistogeniae	Tribe Schistogeniini
Subtribe Myrmedoniae	Tribe Zyrasini
Subtribe Dinardae	Tribe Dinardini
Subtribe Oxypodae	
Subtribe Caloderae	Tribe Oxypodini
Subtribe Aleocharae	Tribe Aleocharini

saved much money. Certainly it would increase manuscript preparation costs and proofing costs. Much of the space so saved has been wasted in other ways, i.e., in page construction by leaving much white space around many figures and not starting new subjects in the middle of a page, etc. Perhaps these abbreviations are very natural to workers whose native language is German, but I think not. Users are well advised to Xerox the list of abbreviations at the end of the book and keep it handy for many references.

In spite of this drawback, the book is excellent. The keys work. The figures are accurate and attractively done. There are some notes on the ecology and habits of the species—I wish there were more. And it is the first comprehensive work on European Aleocharinae in about 50 years. Would that we could produce a similar volume for the Aleocharinae of the United States.

I recommend the volume to all serious coleopterists and fellow “closet German taxonomic key readers”. May there be legions of them.

LITERATURE CITED

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